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A YEAR'S PROGRESS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

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REMARKABLE ENTHUSIASM AND ACTIVITY.

WRITING on February 10, 1904, just one year has elapsed since the Convention for Religious Education met in Chicago, under the auspices of the Council of Seventy. The influence of that convention, and of the movement which brought it to pass and found expression in it, has been the most important feature in the religious world, perhaps even in the educational world, during the past twelve months. The intense interest in the problems of religious and moral education, whether in the Sunday school, the public school, or the home, and the enthusiastic expectation that great things are soon to be accomplished in this most important field, have characterized the year. The activity also has been tremendous. Books, articles in weekly and daily papers, addresses before educational institutions, ministerial associations, Sunday-school conventions, and all kinds of assemblages for the discussion of Christian and intellectual progress, have been innumerable, and the effect of them has been incalculably good. It is safe to say that religious education was never before undertaken with so much energy, intelligence, and determination.

GROWTH OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION.

The Religious Education Association has not been the direct cause of all this progress; for the Association was itself the product of the movement which has accomplished so much. But the Association is an index of the movement, and its growth marks the strength which the movement has attained. The growth of the Religious Education Association has been remarkable. It would be difficult to find a parallel in religious history for what the Association has achieved during the past

twelve months. Sixteen hundred persons have become active members, paying an enrolment fee of one dollar, and annual dues of two dollars each—not a small sum under the circumstances. This active membership is more than one-half of the active membership of the National Educational Association, which has been the most influential and dignified educational body in the United States for a generation. In addition to this, the Association has a list of general and departmental officers to the number of 250. The officers and members of the Association belong to the best class of ministers, educators, and religious workers in all fields. It is difficult to see how a stronger or more trustworthy organization for the promotion of religious and moral education could be made. This body of officers and members is not a mere list of names, but a most earnest, energetic, and influential union of the strongest forces for securing improvement in this important direction. The Chicago convention a year ago was one of the most striking and effective of American religious movements, and the second convention, which is to meet in Philadelphia in a few weeks (March 2, 3, and 4), will be its equal—indeed, its superior. The program, as already publicly announced (see the *BIBLICAL WORLD* for February, pp. 149–51), contains twice as many addresses as were given in Chicago, and by a group of speakers not less able or distinguished. It is evident, therefore, that the Religious Education Association is meeting the most sanguine expectations of its friends.

THE SUBJECT DISCUSSED AT THE CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

In the convention of the National Educational Association held in Boston last July it was a marked departure from any previous meeting that "Religious Education" was made the subject of one of the department sessions of the National Council. Three papers were presented in that session, dealing with the subject of religious education as related to general education. These papers were by Professor George A. Coe, Ph.D., of the Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.; Professor Edward A.

Pace, of the Catholic University, Washington, D. C.; and Dr. W. T. Harris, the United States Commissioner of Education. The attendance at this session crowded the large church in which it was held, and the interest in the subject was intense. Clearly, general education is prepared to find, and many of the general educators are already working to show, that religious education is too important to be left exclusively to the Sunday school.

What general educators should do, what ways can be devised for accomplishing the higher purposes of religious education in connection with general education, must be for years to come a most stirring and vital subject; that the subject is open and will be dealt with there can be no doubt. The superficial notion that the public schools exist primarily for the purpose of cramming children with information—that is, for purposes of instruction merely—prevails in the public mind, and has often affected the character of public-school work. The larger and truer idea that all instruction is primarily for the purpose of education, not for the purpose of giving information, has become fully established among first-class educators, and must become the conception of the people. But education certainly means that the children shall be brought to know, to desire, and to do the best; it is the making of good and efficient men and women for the highest individual and social life. The moral element in education, and indeed to many minds the religious element also, simply cannot be omitted from general education, for the reason that without these elements there can be no complete and ideal education.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PUBLIC PRESS.

One of the most striking facts in connection with the convention a year ago was the unexpected and great support which the public press gave to the movement. Almost every first-class religious paper, of whatever denomination, approved and in varying degrees assisted the movement. The daily press also in many cities gave extended reports of the convention, and manifested an unusual interest in what was being done. This support

of the public press has continued during the year, and there have appeared literally thousands of articles in the daily and weekly papers of the entire country discussing the subject of religious and moral education. In Chicago, for example, the question of religious instruction in the public schools has been revived and is being agitated with great zeal between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The discussion of these new problems of education through the papers of the United States has been overwhelmingly in recognition and support of the forward movement.

THE "COUNTER-REFORMATION" MOVEMENTS.

In the sixteenth century, when the great Protestant movement accomplished the reformation of religious faith and practice, as they had become petrified in the Roman Catholic church, one of the conspicuous good results of the movement was the so-called "Counter-Reformation" which took place in the Catholic church itself. It was perfectly clear to Roman Catholics at that time that their own faith and practice needed reforming; but obviously they could not join the Protestant movement. They therefore created that great organization, the order of Jesuits; they held the famous Council of Trent; they carried out the savage inquisition. In these and other ways they initiated reform within their own ranks, while at the same time they carried on a violent warfare against the Protestants who had brought in this era of reform. Quite similarly, the present movement for religious and moral education has been followed by "counter-reformation" movements in those quarters where there had been least progress, and therefore the greatest need for improvement. Since the creation of the Religious Education Association a year ago there have been organized two denominational counter-movements; also, one moribund organization has been called back to life for the purpose of opposition as well as of new activity. These organizations are an indication that the Association is leading a forward movement that reaches to the depths and borders of the religious world. It cannot of course be supposed that all persons will see the problem in the same way, or go about the solution of it by the same means. These other organizations have their own ideas

as to what should be accomplished, and how. But the thing of most significance is that the persons connected with them have actually been aroused to do for religious education some real thinking and some real work.

PROGRESS IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL FIELD.

Many people at the present time think religious education synonymous with the Sunday school. It has been the distinct effort of the Religious Education Association from its inception to show that there are sixteen or more agencies in addition to the Sunday school which are contributing essentially to religious education. It is, however, gratifying to notice that during the last twelve months the Sunday-school world has been thoroughly aroused to the vital needs of its work. Leading officers in the International Sunday School Association have become active members and supporters of the Religious Education Association, showing that the chief Sunday-school organization recognizes the need of help in bringing its instruction and its point of view nearer to the present ideal. The friendly co-operation which now exists and will continue to exist between these two organizations for Sunday-school work means rapid and satisfactory progress in this field.

In all parts of the United States, not alone in the East, a large number of Sunday schools are seeking for graded courses of instruction to supplement or to supersede courses already in use. The gradation of the children into years and classes according to the method of the public schools is already general, and the necessity for this no longer requires to be argued. The graded curriculum is also coming to be recognized as the ideal thing, and all kinds of efforts are being made to produce and to secure graded courses so that a properly graded curriculum can be constructed. The main thing that holds back progress at this point is the lack of sufficient and satisfactory courses of instruction. There are several good series for the kindergarten and primary departments, and several for the senior department; but for the junior and intermediate departments, for pupils of seven or eight to thirteen or fourteen years of age, there is little yet that can be

fully approved. Many persons, however, are engaged in planning and constructing courses designed for a full Sunday-school curriculum. It can only be by a process of growth and experience that the best courses can be proved such. We may look forward hopefully in view of the earnest labors and increasing intelligence turned toward the development of the ideal Sunday-school curriculum and the material for putting it into complete operation.

NEW BOOKS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

With all these evidences of progress, the last to be mentioned is by no means the least. A remarkable group of books upon the subject of religious education, chiefly regarding the Sunday school, has appeared during the year. The urgent need of competent books to present the higher ideas and ideals of religious education is being rapidly supplied. There are no less than six new books upon this subject, every one of them written from the best point of view, and highly useful to the cause of religious education. These are: (1) *The Proceedings of the Chicago Convention of the Religious Education Association* (Executive Office of the Association, Chicago; \$1); (2) Burton and Mathews, *Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School* (University of Chicago Press; \$1); (3) Haslett, *The Pedagogical Bible School* (Revell Co., \$1.25); (4) DuBois, *The Natural Way in Moral Training* (Revell Co., \$1.25); (5) Mead, *Modern Methods in Sunday School Work* (Dodd, Mead & Co.; \$1.50); (6) Smith, *Sunday School Teaching* (Young Churchman Co., Milwaukee; \$0.50). There are other books also which have been published during the year in this field, but these at least are deserving of careful study. The meaning of the present forward movement, the ideals which guide it, and the ways of accomplishing it can in general be gathered from this fine group of new books on religious education. It is known, also, that several additional books of the same class will be published during the coming spring and summer, increasing most helpfully this useful literature; for example, a work by President G. Stanley Hall on *Adolescence*, another by Professor George A. Coe on *Education in Religion*, and another by Professor George W. Pease on *The Modern Bible-School*.